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Tucked away in the \$250 billion war supplemental spending bill approved by the House of Representatives last week was \$5 million to fund the first U.S. consulate in the remote and restive Chinese region of Tibet.

Rep. Mark Steven Kirk, Illinois Republican, has pushed for the establishment of the consulate, noting that U.S. diplomats had no presence in Tibet during fierce clashes in March between Chinese authorities and pro-autonomy demonstrators, our correspondent David R. Sands reports. With Beijing imposing a news blackout on the violence, the nearest American consulate was 1,500 miles away in Chengdu.

The Chinese government said fewer than 20 people were killed in the clashes, but Tibetan activist groups Friday put the number of fatalities at 209.

Mr. Kirk, co-chairman of the House U.S.-China Working Group, told The Washington Times in April that he had personally pitched the idea of a Tibetan consulate to Chinese Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong, who said Beijing would consider the proposal. Lodi Gyari, a top adviser to the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, told lawmakers at an April 3 hearing he supported the idea.